

# Preventative medication used in Migraine treatment

Information and advice for patients

## Neurology

The following medication is used to reduce migraine frequency. The dose should be gradually increased until headaches are suppressed or the maximum dose is reached. Stay on this dose for 3-4 months before evaluating its effectiveness. If you start to get any side effects please let your GP, Neurologist or Headache Nurse know, to discuss reducing the dose to a previously tolerated level or stopping the medication.

### Amitriptyline:

<b>For 14 days take:</b>	<b>10mgs in the evening</b>
Increase by 10mg every 14 days until reaching 50mgs	
<b>Thereafter take:</b>	<b>50mgs</b>

If after 3 months the headaches are not suppressed and you are tolerating the side effects then continue to increase the amitriptyline as below:

<b>For 14 days take:</b>	<b>60mgs in the evening</b>
Increase by 10mg every 14 days until reaching 100mgs	
<b>Thereafter take:</b>	<b>100mgs daily</b>

Potential side effects include:

- Sedation
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth
- Constipation

Rarely may you see mood changes, or heart arrhythmias. Only continue to increase the doses of these drugs if the side effects can be tolerated. This drug is not recommended if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or are breastfeeding. Women of childbearing age should take adequate contraceptive precautions.

# Preventative medication used in Migraine treatment

Information and advice for patients

## Neurology

### Propranolol:

	Morning	Evening
For 14 days take:	40mgs	
For 14 days take:	40mgs	40mgs

If tolerating continue to increase as follows:

	Morning	Evening
For 14 days take:	40mgs	80mgs
For 14 days take:	80mgs	80mgs

Potential side effects include:

- Abdominal discomfort
- Bradycardia
- Confusion
- Dry eye (reversible on discontinuation)
- Erectile dysfunction
- Headache
- Nausea
- Peripheral coldness
- Rash (reversible on discontinuation)
- Syncope
- Vomiting
- Depression
- Diarrhoea
- Dizziness
- Dyspnoea
- Fatigue
- Heart failure
- Paraesthesia
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Sleep disorders
- Visual impairment

Beta-blockers may cause intra-uterine growth restriction, neonatal hypoglycaemia and bradycardia, the risk is greater in severe hypertension.

# Preventative medication used in Migraine treatment

Information and advice for patients

## Neurology

### Topiramate:

	Evening
For 14 days take:	25mgs
For 14 days take:	50mgs
For 14 days take:	75mgs
Thereafter take:	100mgs

### Potential Side effects include:

- Tiredness
- Pins and needles in the fingers and toes
- Dizziness
- Numbness
- Difficulty with language
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Indigestion
- Dry mouth
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty with concentration
- Difficulty sleeping
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Change in taste
- Vision disorders
- Kidney stones (1% risk with long term use)

A rare side effect can include sudden blurring of vision with pain and redness of the eye. If this has occurred in the first month of starting topiramate, this can indicate raised pressure in the eye (glaucoma). If you develop these symptoms, especially in the first few weeks of starting the medication you should tell your doctor immediately. Do not stop taking topiramate unless your doctor tells you to. If your treatment is stopped it should be done gradually.

This drug is not recommended if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or are breastfeeding. Women of childbearing age should take adequate contraceptive precautions. The use of topiramate has been associated with birth defects in a small number of infants when it has been used during pregnancy. Higher doses of the oral contraceptive pill are required whilst taking topiramate. Women taking the oral contraceptive pill should discuss the dose with their GP.

# Preventative medication used in Migraine treatment

Information and advice for patients

## Neurology

### Candesartan:

	Morning	Evening
For 14 days take:		4mgs
For 14 days take:	4mgs	4mgs
For 14 days take:	4mgs	8mgs
Thereafter take:	8mgs	8mgs

After one month, a blood test should be performed to check the kidney function and blood count.

Potential side effects include:

- Dizziness (this can be due to low blood pressure and may improve with increasing the amount drunk)
- Skin rash

Rare side effects include:

- Liver inflammation
- Cough
- Blood disorders

This drug is not recommended if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or are breastfeeding. Women of childbearing age should take adequate contraceptive precautions.

# Preventative medication used in Migraine treatment

Information and advice for patients

## Neurology

### Further information

#### The migraine trust

<https://migrainetrust.org/>

(Website accessed & checked 02 August 2022)

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites

[www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](https://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National institute for health and care excellence (NICE) (2012). *Headaches in over 12s: diagnosis and management clinical guideline [CG150]*. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg150> (Accessed 02 August 2022).

British association for the study of headache (BASH) (2019) *BASH guidelines 2019*. Available at: <https://www.bash.org.uk/guidelines/> (Accessed 02 August 2022).

International headache society (IHS) (2021). *The international classification of headache disorders (ICHD-3)*. 3rd ed. Available at: <https://ichd-3.org/> (Accessed 02 August 2022).

Written by Consultant Neurologist Dr David Nicholl and Clinical Nurse Specialist Sally Ware, Neurology department, Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust.

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email [swbh.library@nhs.net](mailto:swbh.library@nhs.net).



A Teaching Trust of The University of Birmingham  
Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals  
© Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

ML6791

Issue Date: September 2022  
Review Date: September 2025